



NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY
WESTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI

TODD P. GRAVES

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www.usdoj.gov/usao/mow/index.html

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Audio comments from U.S. Attorney Todd Graves and photos from today's announcement will be available to download from the district's Web site at

www.usdoj.gov/usao/mow/news2006/graves.mp3

www.usdoj.gov/usao/mow/news2006/graves.jpg

TODD GRAVES STEPS DOWN AS U.S. ATTORNEY

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – Todd P. Graves, United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, announced today that he is resigning from the presidentially-appointed position effective March 24, 2006.

Graves, 40, was nominated by President George W. Bush to be the top federal law enforcement official for western Missouri on July 30, 2001. Graves took his oath of office on an interim appointment as U.S. Attorney by the U.S. District Court on September 17, 2001, and his presidential appointment was formally confirmed by the United States Senate on October 11, 2001.

Graves came to the U.S. Attorney's Office from his position as Platte County Prosecuting Attorney, an office to which he was elected in 1994 and 1998. At the time of his election to that post in 1994, he was the youngest full-time prosecuting attorney in Missouri.

The nation's 93 United States Attorneys are responsible for the prosecution of federal crimes such as firearms, narcotics, public corruption, money laundering, Internet child pornography and fraud; the defense of civil cases brought against the United States; and the collection of debts owed to the United States and restitution owed by criminals to their victims.

In making the announcement of his resignation today, Graves highlighted several significant accomplishments of his administration.

* Overall, criminal prosecutions increased 43 percent during Graves' administration, with more than 1,000 defendants charged in 2005.

* Graves prosecuted more death penalty cases than any U.S. Attorney in recent history, with capital cases filed against eight defendants. In 2005, nearly 10 percent of criminals on death row in the federal system were prosecuted in the Western District of Missouri.

Prior to death penalty convictions against two co-defendants in 2000, the most recent federal death penalty imposed in the Western District of Missouri was the 1953 case involving the kidnaping and murder of Bobby Greenlease. Since 2001, two defendants have been sentenced to death and six await trial.

* Under Graves, the district has become a national leader in prosecuting child exploitation crimes. With a record of 42 child exploitation cases filed in 2005, the district ranks sixth nationally among the 93 federal districts.

Graves, who was appointed by then-U.S. Attorney General John Ashcroft to co-chair the Department of Justice Child Exploitation and Obscenity Working Group, made crimes against children the district's highest local priority. Graves launched the Computer Crimes and Child Exploitation Unit in 2002. Prior to the formation of the new unit, the district averaged about a dozen child exploitation cases per year. With 13 child exploitation cases filed so far this year, the district is on track to continue that upward trend.

* The Western District of Missouri is recognized nationally for launching one of the first anti-gun violence programs, and one of the most successful. In 2004, the district led the nation in the prosecution of gun crimes, with 352 defendants charged with illegally possessing a firearm. That increased in 2005, with 373 defendants charged.

In total, 662 defendants have been charged with illegally possessing a firearm. On average, each defendant convicted of being a felon in possession of a firearm had three prior felony convictions. Among those defendants, 33 percent had previous felony convictions for crimes of violence and 28 percent had previous felony convictions for narcotics possession or distribution.

This news release, as well as additional information about the office of the United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, is available on-line at

www.usdoj.gov/usao/mow/index.html